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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE-ILLCIT TRAFFICKING:
ENHANCING THE INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR
OPERATIONS ALONG THE SOUTHWEST BORDER**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Executive Summary

Title: Joint Interagency Task Force-Illicit Trafficking: Enhancing the Interagency Organizational Framework for Operations along the Southwest Border

Author: Major Matthew F. McDonald, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The United States (U.S.) must enhance and streamline its approach to operations along the southwest border (SWB) to counter effectively the threat posed by the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and protect its number one national security interests: its citizens, allies, and partners. This paper examines current interagency activities and military support along the SWB and proposes an interagency organizational structure to enhance and streamline operations, Joint Interagency Task Force-Illicit Trafficking (JIATF-IT).

Discussion: The U.S. 2,000-mile porous SWB and Mexico's ongoing drug war present significant challenges for U.S. law enforcement agencies. Mexico's drug war and its "spillover" crime and violence have become more than just a border security problem or an illicit trafficking problem. It has evolved into a national security problem. The federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies involved in operations along the SWB have developed and implemented a number of task forces, fusion centers, initiatives, and projects to combat transnational criminal organizations, more specifically the Mexican DTOs. Their efforts have produced tremendous results. However, problems with information sharing, operational overlap, duplication of effort, and competing strategies impede the effectiveness of the current interagency approach to operations along the SWB. Without question, the national security challenges that the U.S. faces today and will face in the future require interagency, or whole-of-government, solutions. These solutions will require structural and cultural changes within federal agencies. The U.S. Government has experienced some successes with interagency operations in its history. The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program implemented during the Vietnam War to coordinate interagency pacification activities serves as the first success story. The JIATFs, specifically JIATF-South, created during the 1990s for command and control of drug interdiction operations serves as the second success story. These successes at coordinating and harnessing interagency activities provide the start points from which to build the organizational structure required to overcome the challenges presented by the mission along the SWB. The U.S. Government must adapt its interagency, or whole-of-government, organizational constructs to foster collaboration and unity of effort as well as increase cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion: A change must occur along the SWB to address the national security threat on the U.S. doorstep. The JIATF-IT organizational structure aligns with President Obama's guidance in the 2010 National Security Strategy for integrating the country's homeland security and national security efforts. It addresses the coordination, integration, and synchronization problems that currently impede interagency operations along the SWB. Finally, the JIATF-IT structure leverages effectively the capabilities of the participating agencies.

Introduction

“I have made securing our Southwest border a top priority since I came to office. That is why my administration has dedicated unprecedented resources and personnel to combating the transnational criminal organizations that traffic in drugs, weapons, and money, and smuggle people across the border with Mexico.”

—President Barack H. Obama, August 13, 2010¹

The United States’ (U.S.) 2,000-mile porous southwest border (SWB) and Mexico’s ongoing drug war present significant challenges for U.S. law enforcement agencies. Mexico’s drug war and its “spillover” crime and violence have become more than just a border security problem or an illicit trafficking problem. It has evolved into a national security problem. As noted by President Obama above, the U.S. has committed a tremendous amount of resources and personnel to operations along the SWB. The federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies involved in operations along the SWB have developed and implemented a number of task forces, fusion centers, initiatives, and projects to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), more specifically the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). Their efforts have produced tremendous results. However, problems with information sharing, operational overlap, duplication of effort, and competing strategies impede the effectiveness of the current interagency approach to operations along the SWB.

Without question, the national security challenges that the U.S. faces today and in the future require interagency, or whole-of-government, solutions. These solutions will require structural and cultural changes within federal agencies. Enhanced interagency organizational frameworks/structures have served as recommendations in numerous reports and testimonies on national security but the federal agencies have taken little, if any, action on these recommendations. The U.S. must enhance and streamline its approach to operations along the

SWB to counter effectively the threat posed by the Mexican DTOs and protect its number one national security interests: its citizens, allies, and partners.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) Project Gunrunner serves as a good case study to highlight some of the problems with information sharing, operational overlap, duplication of effort, and competing strategies that impede the effectiveness of the current interagency activities along the SWB. This paper examines current interagency activities and military support along the SWB and proposes an interagency organizational structure to enhance and streamline operations, Joint Interagency Task Force-Illicit Trafficking (JIATF-IT).

Case Study: Project Gunrunner

In 2005, ATF initiated Project Gunrunner as part of their SWB Initiative to combat cross-border firearms trafficking from the United States to Mexico. This project would require ATF to coordinate closely and share information with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Embassy in Mexico, Government of Mexico (GoM), and state and local law enforcement partners. In 2010, the Department of Justice (DoJ) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a review of the impact of Project Gunrunner. The review discovered a lack of information sharing and coordination between ATF, DEA, and ICE as well as issues with operational overlap and duplication of effort. ATF and ICE have overlapping authorities and responsibilities for investigating firearms trafficking to Mexico.

The DoJ OIG revealed that ATF and ICE did not work or coordinate effectively on investigations or conduct joint investigations.² This lack of coordination increases the possibility for operations by each agency targeting the same organizations. The review highlights two separate operations focused on firearms trafficking, ATF's Project Gunrunner and ICE's

Operation Armas Cruzadas. According to the OIG report, Gunrunner and Armas Cruzadas targeted firearms trafficking into Mexico at different points in the process. Armas Cruzadas focused on trans-border firearms trafficking networks along the SWB. Gunrunner targeted firearms trafficking through investigations of illegal firearms trafficked into Mexico and associated violent crime.³ These two operations overlapped and required close coordination and information sharing to succeed. As the report emphasizes, “ATF cannot effectively combat firearms trafficking to Mexico without border and smuggling enforcement by ICE, and ICE cannot always investigate smugglers without investigating the source of these guns (gun dealers and gun shows). Despite this, we found that ATF and ICE have not worked well together in their respective firearms trafficking investigations.”⁴

According to a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report on the Merida Initiative, Attorney General Eric Holder has called for a third evaluation of ATF’s Project Gunrunner. This action stems from allegations of ATF’s questionable investigative practices during an Arizona-based investigation conducted as part of Project Gunrunner, Operation Fast and Furious. In February 2011, ATF whistleblowers informed members of Congress that ATF had allowed suspects to transfer large quantities of firearms to gunrunners before moving to arrest. Law enforcement authorities found two of these firearms at the scene of the murder of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry near the SWB. Additionally, questions arose about whether a firearm initially trafficked by a suspect in a Texas-based Project Gunrunner investigation served as the weapon used to murder ICE Special Agent Jamie Zapata and wound Special Agent Victor Avila in Mexico on February 15, 2011.⁵

On July 26, 2011, the U.S. Congress published a joint staff report on Operation Fast and Furious. This report found that ATF and DoJ failed to notify its own personnel stationed in

Mexico, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, and GoM authorities about the operation. Even though the operation directly involved the duties of the ATF personnel in Mexico and affected Mexico, ATF senior leadership feared any disclosure of information would compromise the investigation. In late 2009, ATF personnel in Mexico noticed a significant increase in firearms recovered at crime scenes in Mexico that traced back to an ongoing investigation in the ATF's Phoenix Field Division. When they raised their concerns, ATF senior leadership in Phoenix and Washington D.C. reassured the ATF personnel in Mexico that they had everything under control. However, ATF agents continued to raise their concerns about the number of weapons flowing across the SWB. ATF leadership finally informed the ATF agents in Mexico that the investigation would shut down as early as July 2010. However, the investigative phase of Operation Fast and Furious did not close until January 2011 following the Brian Terry murder in December 2010.⁶

Due to the ATF's questionable investigative practices, U.S. and Mexican law enforcement continue to seize weapons connected to the operation and recover weapons at crime scenes on both sides of the SWB.⁷ This case study serves as just one example of recurring problems with interagency operations along the SWB. In the following sections, I will discuss and examine current interagency activities and military support along the SWB. I will highlight the problems that exist with the current interagency approach and provide examples of interagency successes for the U.S. Government. The following background on the problems plaguing Mexico and the SWB as well as U.S. national security interests will highlight the challenges and requirements for the United States to counter effectively the threat posed by TCOs, specifically the Mexican DTOs.

Background

During his presidential campaign in 2006, President Felipe Calderon promised to take an “iron-fist” approach to the DTOs. This message and approach resonated with many Mexicans. Sylvia Longmire states “Most Mexicans will say that life was far from perfect and peaceful before President Calderon came into office in December 2006, but it was definitely less bloody. The aggressive stance Calderon has taken against organized crime since his inauguration is largely blamed for the huge surge in drug-related violence over the last several years.”⁸ President Calderon’s deployment of the Mexican military to “hot spots” around the country has not addressed the situation. As he throws more soldiers at the DTOs, they fight back even harder. This military approach has not bought President Calderon more time to develop a more long-term sustainable strategy to combat the DTOs. He must continue to try to institute reforms to government institutions during a violent war with the DTOs.

While President Calderon’s war against the DTOs has resulted in the take down of high-level DTO leaders, narcotics and violence continue to flow across the SWB. Approximately 17,000 Americans die each year from drugs supplied by the Mexican DTOs.⁹ According to the 2011 National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, seven major DTOs operating throughout Mexico control the flow of drugs across the SWB. Their reach extends well beyond the SWB. They have cells operating in over 300 U.S. cities. Additionally, the DTOs have expanded their operations and influence globally. With the expansion of the DTO’s operations and influence, it is now more important for U.S. and Mexican law enforcement to focus their efforts on disrupting and dismantling these criminal organizations (Refer to Figure 1 for cartel influence and smuggling routes).¹⁰

As the Mexican DTOs battle for the drug trafficking routes, the level of drug-related violence continues rise on the Mexican side of the border as well as “spillover” into the United States. These turf wars have led to an increased demand for firearms and ammunition by the Mexican DTOs.



Figure 1. Areas of Cartel Influence with Smuggling Routes¹¹

U.S. National Security Interests

“My highest priority is to keep the American people safe. I believe that Homeland Security is indistinguishable from National Security – conceptually and functionally, they should be thought of together rather than separately. Instead of separating these issues, we must create an integrated, effective, and efficient approach to enhance the national security of the United States. The White House must be organized in ways that reflect this reality.”

– President Barack H. Obama, February 23, 2009¹²

The strength of the U.S. partnership and relationship with Mexico has a direct effect on both countries’ security. With the amount of interaction across the SWB, Mexico has a larger impact on the daily lives of U.S. citizens than any other country, with the possible exception of

Canada. Unfortunately, this daily interaction has a down side. The growing violence and influence of the DTOs has destabilized Mexico and penetrated the United States. The DTO's network and influence will continue to expand and pose a greater national security challenge for the U.S. and Mexico. This threat has crossed the border, undermined Mexican stability through corruption, and harmed citizens on both sides of the border.

The U.S. Government has no greater responsibility than to protect its citizens. To counter the threat posed by the DTOs, President Obama emphasized, “[W]e must integrate our approach to homeland security with our broader national security approach.”¹³ The White House has taken the first step to achieve better integration of the country's homeland security and national security efforts by merging the staffs of the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council. Now, the challenge for the different federal agencies lies in the implementation of this strategy to ensure integration occurs at the lowest levels. Implementation will require education, training, and relationship building amongst the federal agencies; realignment of personnel and resources to more effectively meet the challenges and threats to the country; and the review of authorities, policies, and programs to foster and strengthen interagency coordination.

President Obama effectively laid out the requirement for the nation's approach to securing the homeland. He stated “Our approach relies on our shared efforts to identify and interdict threats; deny hostile actors the ability to operate within our borders; maintain effective control of our physical borders; safeguard lawful trade and travel into and out of the United States; disrupt and dismantle transnational terrorist, and criminal organizations; and ensure our national resilience in the face of the threat and hazards.”¹⁴ A number of federal agencies have

developed interagency task force initiatives to enhance information sharing and increase the effectiveness of operations along the SWB.

Current Interagency Activities along the Southwest Border

Problems with information sharing, operational overlap, duplication of effort, and competing strategies currently impede the effectiveness of interagency activities implemented to combat illicit trafficking along the SWB. However, federal agencies have made efforts to address the coordination, integration, and synchronization issues impeding interagency activities. The efforts of the DoJ's El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program serve as examples of the problems encountered with information sharing, operational overlap, and duplication of effort among the federal agencies along the SWB. For the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have each developed and implemented multi-agency initiatives to enhance interagency cooperation, collaboration, and information sharing as well as increase the effectiveness of law enforcement operations along the SWB. With ICE's Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) Initiative and CBP's Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT) and Joint Field Command (JFC), DHS has made a concerted effort to address coordination, integration, and synchronization of interagency operations along the SWB. These DHS initiatives serve as steps in the right direction towards enhancing and streamlining interagency operations.

El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC)

In 1974, the DoJ established the EPIC, led by the DEA, to serve as the regional tactical intelligence center along the SWB to collect and disseminate information to law enforcement

agencies about smuggling operations. Originally staffed by only three federal agencies (DEA, Customs Service, and Immigration and Naturalization Service), it now hosts representatives from 21 federal, state, and local agencies with over 300 investigative, analytic, and support personnel on site. According to the DoJ review of EPIC, “EPIC supports more than 19,000 individual users and also provides information to a wider population of law enforcement users through High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) intelligence centers, state and local fusion centers, and other federal centers.”¹⁵ EPIC seeks to become the “hub for the HDTAs,”¹⁶ one of EPICs five functions laid out in the 2000 General Counterdrug Intelligence Plan (the Plan).

However, in the June 2010 review of EPIC, the DoJ noted that EPIC does not serve as the “hub” for the HDTAs. The HDTAs operate as 32 autonomous centers.¹⁷ In addition to EPIC’s inability to serve as an intelligence “hub,” the DoJ review identified several other deficiencies. The most notable deficiencies centered on EPIC’s inconsistency in integrating, coordinating, and sharing information with other federal and state intelligence centers. According to the DoJ report,

“EPIC lacks policy-setting authority over the 32 regional HDTAs, and no policy requires the HDTAs to provide drug-movement related information to EPIC or to ensure that contacting EPIC is incorporated into their operational protocols. Consequently, EPIC cannot provide the regional HDTAs with information by connecting their individual databases and providing them access to federal databases.”¹⁸

The relationship, or lack thereof, between EPIC and the HDTAs highlights the problem of lack of coordination and information sharing between the agencies involved in operations along the SWB.

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Program

In 1982, the DoJ established the OCDETF Program to launch a nationwide attack on organized drug traffickers. The OCDETF Program serves as the focal point for the United States

Attorney General’s strategy for disrupting and dismantling major drug-trafficking and money laundering organizations. According to the DoJ, “The Program operates nationwide and combines the resources and unique expertise of numerous federal agencies in a coordinated attack against major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. The participants involved include the 94 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Criminal and Tax Divisions of the U.S. Department of Justice and numerous State and local agencies.”¹⁹

The DoJ employs OCDETF Strike Forces in key cities and regions across the country to conduct operations targeting high-level drug trafficking and money laundering organizations operating in those areas. The OCDETF Strike Forces gather intelligence and disseminate leads to OCDETF agents and prosecutors in the area as well as neighboring ones.²⁰ According to the 2011 National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, “Approximately 42% of OCDETF investigations are SWB-related, while 40% of its defendants also come from cases related to this region.”²¹ The DoJ views the OCDETF Fusion Center as the “hub” for OCDETF’s intelligence efforts and enhances its capacity to conduct intelligence-driven operations.²²

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 established the ONDCP to coordinate and oversee drug-control programs and funding for the federal government. The ONDCP Reauthorization Act of 1998 authorized the ONDCP Director to designate specified areas in the United States as HIDTAs. In determining whether or not to designate an area as a HIDTA, the Director considers the level of drug production or distribution, resources committed by state and local law

enforcement to the drug trafficking problem, and the impact of the drug-related activities on other parts of the country.²³

According to the ONDCP, 28 HIDTAs currently comprise the program and receive federal funding for initiatives to facilitate cooperation, coordination, and intelligence sharing between federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. The number of HIDTAs rises to 32 if one breaks out the five regions of the SWB HIDTA. A regional Executive Board comprised of an equal number of federal and non-federal law enforcement leaders governs each HIDTA and possesses the authority to design and implement initiatives based on the drug trafficking threats and trends within its region. The HIDTA program's 57 Intelligence and Investigative Support Centers spread across the 28 HIDTA regions conduct intelligence collection and analysis and threat assessments for the law enforcement agencies operating in their respective regions (Refer to Figure 2 for Fusion Center and Investigative Support Center locations in the five regions of the SWB HIDTA).²⁴ According to the DoJ report, "The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) funds and oversees each individual HIDTA's budget and counterdrug plan, and approves task forces formed by each HIDTA to ensure their efforts support national drug control strategy. Beyond this level of oversight by the ONDCP, the HIDTAs are largely autonomous entities."²⁵

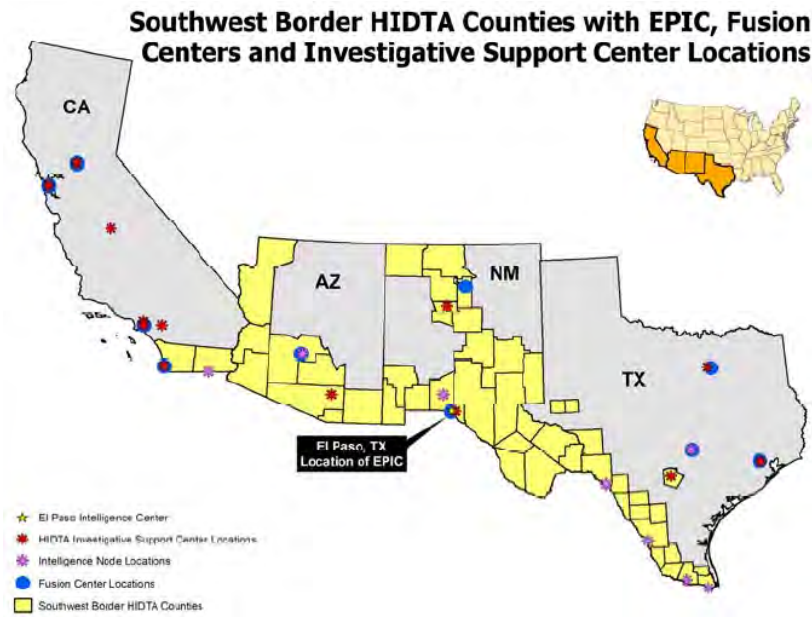


Figure 2. Southwest Border HIDTA Counties with EPIC, Fusion Centers and Investigative Support Center Locations²⁶

Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) Initiative

As the largest investigative agency in the DHS, ICE enforces a wide range of laws, which include those related to border security and criminal smuggling.²⁷ In 2006, in response to the increase in cross-border crime and violence by Mexican DTOs, ICE created a multi-agency initiative, BEST, to leverage federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement resources to combat TCOs that seek to exploit vulnerabilities along the borders of the United States. The BEST teams seek to enhance information sharing and foster collaboration between the participating agencies. The BESTs include representatives from agencies within DHS (ICE, CBP, and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)) and DoJ (ATF, DEA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and U.S. Attorney's Office) as well as key state, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies. ICE currently has 11 of its 21 BESTs located on the SWB. The SWB BESTs focus on combating illicit firearms trafficking by TCOs from the United States into Mexico.

Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT)

CBP has instituted two frameworks to enhance border security operations along the Arizona border. According to the CBP Fact Sheet on ACTT-Arizona/Sonora Corridor, in September 2009, CBP established the ACTT in Arizona to integrate the capabilities and resources of over 60 federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in Arizona and Mexico to combat TCOs that threaten the safety and security of the communities on both sides of the border. Arizona serves as one of the busiest border regions. The number of drugs seized and illegal immigrants apprehended in Arizona comprise approximately 50% of drug seizures and illegal immigrant apprehensions in the United States.²⁸ In its Fall 2011 report to the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC), the SWB Task Force (SWBTF) recommended the implementation of the ACTT-concept to the other corridors along the SWB: Southern California, New Mexico/West Texas, and Southeast Texas.²⁹

Joint Field Command (JFC)

On 3 February 2011, CBP announced the establishment of JFC-Arizona to realign resources to meet the challenges and threats faced in Arizona. According to CBP, "The JFC oversees all CBP operations throughout Arizona, and is responsible for strategic and operational lay down for the Tucson and Yuma Border Patrol Sectors, the Office of Field Operations' Tucson Field Office, and the Office of Air and Marine's Tucson and Yuma Air Branches."³⁰

Military Support to Operations along the Southwest Border

In response to the rise in violence in Mexico and along the SWB and DTO infiltration across the border into the United States, U.S. policymakers and lawmakers have called for an increase in military support along the border. To understand the role of the military in combating the DTO threat within the borders of the United States, one must examine the history

of military support to civilian law enforcement agencies (MSCLEA) including the lead DoD organizations for MSCLEA and the effectiveness of MSCLEA.

In the CRS report on the role of the military in securing America's borders, R. Chuck Mason states "Since the 1980s, DoD, including the National Guard, as authorized by Congress, has conducted a wide variety of counterdrug support missions along the borders of the United States. Although DoD does not have the "assigned responsibility to stop terrorists from coming across our borders," its support role in counterdrug and counterterrorism efforts appears to have increased the department's profile in border security."³¹

According to Major Eric A. Reid, USMC, the Reagan Administration officially labeled DTOs a threat to U.S. national security. On 8 April 1986, President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive (NSDD)-221, which expanded the role of the U.S. military in the war on drugs. In NSDD-221, President Reagan declared drug trafficking a national security threat and authorized the Secretary of Defense to take steps to increase the military's role in counternarcotics operations. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1989 directed an increase in military support to counternarcotics operations by designating DoD as the lead agency for the interdiction of drugs entering the United States. Additionally, the act directed DoD to integrate interagency counterdrug command and control and provide increased funding to states for National Guard for operations along the SWB.³²

Joint Task Force (JTF)-North and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

On 13 November 1989, General Powell, then Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command, issued the order to establish JTF-6 at Fort Bliss, Texas. JTF-6 planned and coordinated military support in areas such as operations, training, and intelligence for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies conducting counterdrug operations in the SWB region.

JTF-6's original area of responsibility (AOR) consisted of the four border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. In February 1995, its AOR expanded to include the entire continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In June 1997, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) assumed responsibility for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.³³

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, DoD leaders began planning for the establishment of a combatant command with the primary responsibility of defending the homeland. On 1 October 2002, USNORTHCOM stood up at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs “to provide command and control of DoD homeland defense efforts and to coordinate defense support of civil authorities.”³⁴ In conjunction with the stand-up of USNORTHCOM, JTF-6 transferred from U.S. Joint Forces Command to USNORTHCOM. On 28 September 2004, DoD renamed JTF-6 as JTF-North and expanded its mission to include providing homeland security support to federal law enforcement agencies.³⁵ In 2011, Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr. stated USNORTHCOM and JTF-North provide considerable support to law enforcement counternarcotics efforts within the United States and in cooperation with the GoM. JTF-North has begun to combine intelligence assets with EPIC to enable greater unity of effort. Additionally, USNORTHCOM continues to work with CBP to share lessons learned from over a decade of countering irregular threats in Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁶

National Guard

The National Guard serves as another vehicle for DoD support to law enforcement counternarcotics efforts within the United States. National Guard personnel may operate in an exclusively federal status (Title 10), in an exclusively state status, or under state control with federal pay and benefits (Title 32). Under Title 10, National Guard personnel operate under

federal control, receive federal pay and benefits, and adhere to the restrictions of the Posse Comitatus Act. In a “state active duty” status, National Guard personnel operate under the control of their state’s governor, receive state pay and benefits, and perform activities authorized by state law. Under Title 32, National Guard personnel serve a federal purpose, receive federal pay and benefits, but operate under the command and control of their state’s governor.³⁷ Recent notable National Guard operations along the SWB include Operation JUMP START (2006-2008) and the deployment of 1,200 National Guard troops to the SWB in May 2010. For both of these operations, the National Guard units served under Title 32.

In 2006, five years after the terrorist attacks on the United States, the Border Patrol still did not possess adequate manpower and resources to impose order effectively to the growing problem along the SWB. A surge of illegal immigrants from Mexico and other Central American countries triggered requests from the governors of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas for the deployment of National Guard troops along the SWB. On May 15, 2006, President Bush informed the nation that 6,000 National Guard troops would deploy to the SWB to support the Border Patrol.

Operation JUMP START commenced on June 15, 2006 and ended on July 15, 2008. During that period, as many as 6,000 National Guard troops participated in the operation at any one time in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The National Guardsmen did not serve in a direct law enforcement role. Instead, they assisted the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building roads, and providing training. This assistance allowed Border Patrol agents to focus on border enforcement activities. For Operation JUMP START, the National Guard displayed its flexibility, operational capability and interoperability by rapidly deploying to the border and

integrating with the Border Patrol. According to Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, USA, “Operation Jump Start exhibited unprecedented cooperation and teamwork among federal agencies engaged in protecting the homeland. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Border Patrol, and the National Guard created a cooperative, operational environment that will endure as an example to other agencies of how to do things right.”³⁸

Following the March 27, 2010 murder of Arizona rancher Robert Krentz, the governors of the four border states requested that President Obama authorize another federal border mission similar to Operation JUMP START. Under pressure from the governors as well as members of Congress to deploy National Guard troops to the SWB, on 25 May 2010, President Obama authorized a one-year deployment of 1,200 National Guard troops to the SWB to support the Border Patrol. The operation paled in comparison to JUMP START and was criticized for the lack of manpower and limited scope. National Guard personnel stationed along the SWB have supported the Border Patrol on the ground through surveillance and intelligence analysis. U.S. government officials have credited the efforts of the National Guard troops for a sharp drop in apprehensions of illegal immigrants. The National Guard troops have served as a “bridge” for long term enhancements in border protection and law enforcement personnel and equipment.

The DoD implemented a new strategy in March 2012 for employment of the National Guard troops along the border in an effort to withdraw 900 National Guard troops from the SWB. Under the new strategy, the remaining 300 National Guard troops will fly helicopters and fixed-wing surveillance planes and analyze intelligence about smuggling routes from command centers.³⁹ The surveillance aircraft will provide a greater ability to spot drug and human traffickers as they approach the SWB from Mexico. Additionally, the Border Patrol will use the

aircraft to transport agents to remote and rugged areas that vehicles cannot reach. This new strategy and reduction in forces serves as a way to reduce costs and increase.

Repeatedly, the National Guard has demonstrated its ability to serve as a force in readiness for homeland security. With the experience of these two deployments to the SWB and multiple deployments of National Guard units to Iraq and Afghanistan, the National Guard possesses operational credibility, capability, and capacity applicable to threat encountered along the SWB that the U.S. government must continue to leverage and integrate into interagency operations along the SWB.

Interagency Team Models

The U.S. Government has experienced some successes with interagency operations in its history. The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program implemented during the Vietnam War to coordinate interagency pacification activities serves as the first success story. The JIATFs, specifically JIATF-South, created during the 1990s for command and control of drug interdiction operations serves as the second success story. These successes at coordinating and harnessing interagency activities provide the start points from which to build the organizational structure required to enhance and streamline operations along the SWB.

Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS)

President Johnson wanted to do a better job at fighting “the other war” in Vietnam. He recognized that the U.S. Government must fix its interagency organizational structure to support pacification efforts in South Vietnam. In 1967, the U.S. Government implemented the CORDS program in Vietnam to coordinate the activities of the military and civilian agencies involved in the pacification program in South Vietnam. The keys to CORDS success centered around the

authority and responsibility given to Robert Komer, the program's architect and first leader, and its organizational structure which enhanced cooperation and unity of command of the pacification program.

As a Washington insider, Robert Komer understood the importance of authority and power to drive and manage the interagency process. He recognized that to push past the bureaucratic resistance from the civilian agencies to achieve success and attain President Johnson's goals for the pacification program he would need a presidential directive or memorandum that outlined his authority over the program and the agencies involved in the pacification efforts. Komer drafted and attained President Johnson's signature on National Security Action Memorandum 343. This memorandum designated Robert Komer as the Special Assistant to the President for Peaceful Construction in Vietnam. In his article on the making of Vietnam pacification policy, Frank L. Jones states "Komer's handiwork ensured him sizable authority not only over seven civilian agencies, but he also had considerable say in the mobilization of military resources to support the President's pacification commitment."⁴⁰ The directive laid out Komer's responsibility for "the direction, coordination and supervision in Washington of U.S. non-military programs for peaceful construction relating to Vietnam."⁴¹ He did not have to answer to or work through the National Security Advisor. Robert Komer had a direct line to President Johnson.

Prior to the establishment of CORDS, U.S. Government interagency operations in Vietnam suffered from a lack of unity of command and effort. No single agency possessed the capacity and capability to handle the challenges of this complex mission in South Vietnam. John Nagl states "There was no organization in the United States government trained and equipped to perform this mission, and little incentive for existing institutions to adapt to meet the need for

such an organization even if that need had been widely recognized.”⁴² The individual civilian agencies functioned within their own organizational “stovepipes” in South Vietnam. Each agency pursued their own agenda and established their individual priorities for operations. This lack of unified effort hampered progress in the provinces of South Vietnam. The establishment of CORDS addressed the interagency coordination problems by integrating the disparate civilian agencies and programs into U.S. Military Assistance Command – Vietnam (USMACV) Headquarters (HQ) under the Commander, USMACV. CORDS placed combined civilian and military teams under a single director supported by consolidated staff directorate comprised of civilian and military personnel. Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. Pope, USAF states “The civilian director of the CORDS held ambassadorial rank equivalent to a four-star general and exercised control over all interagency assets involved in the counterinsurgency effort. In a significant organizational innovation, the civilian CORDS director was dual-hatted as the MACV deputy to the commander for the CORDS, number three in the military chain of command in Vietnam, behind the MACV commander and the military deputy.”⁴³ CORDS consisted of an integrated civil-military structure from the USMACV HQ to district level. At each level, the civilian and military personnel combined to form an interagency team based on skills and abilities, not agency loyalty.⁴⁴ CORDS achieved unity of effort through unity of command and resolved resource disparities by allowing civilian agencies access to military resources.⁴⁵

Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South)

On 7 April 1994, the ONDCP Director signed the first National Interdiction Command and Control Plan (NICCP) which directed the establishment of three national interagency task forces. JIATF-East in Key West, Florida; JIATF-South in Panama; and JIATF-West in Alameda, California served as the new model for command and control of drug interdiction

operations. Unlike the previous JTFs, primarily formed from military organizations, the JIATF concept provided an interagency organizational structure that streamlined drug interdiction efforts by providing centralized planning, coordination, and command and control for all agencies involved in the drug interdiction mission. The JIATFs remained within the military chain of command. However, as “national task forces,” the JIATFs had the authority to coordinate across departments and agencies as well as control assets from any department or agency.

On 1 June 1997, the USSOUTHCOM AOR expanded to include the Caribbean and the waters bordering South America and assumed control of JIATF-East. Following the U.S. military drawdown in Panama in 1999, USSOUTHCOM moved its headquarters to Miami, Florida and JIATF-South merged with JIATF-East in Key West, Florida. On 23 April 2003, USSOUTHCOM redesignated JIATF-East as JIATF-South in order to strengthen the association between the two organizations. According to Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “As a national level counterdrug task force, it is supported by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which works to protect the integrity of JIATF-South’s mission and ensures continued interagency support...The NICCP empowers JIATF-South as the sole authority for detection and monitoring of trafficking within its expansive area of responsibility as well as making it the lead for intelligence fusion, sorting, and handing-off for interdiction. It also stipulates that agencies working with JIATF-South will give it tactical control of their assets for operations.”⁴⁶

The current JIATF-South serves as the “gold standard” for interagency organizations. The interagency partnerships serve as the key to JIATF-South’s success. In 2009, they enabled JIATF-South’s intelligence-driven operations to account for over 40 percent of global cocaine interdiction.⁴⁷ Over its 17 years of operations, it has achieved unparalleled success in interagency coordination and collaboration. Munsing and Lamb state “The 4 branches of the military, 9 different agencies, and 11 partner nations contributing to JIATF–South perform many

different functions, but do so as a team.”⁴⁸ Both the CORDS and JIATF-South experiences prove that the United States can conduct effective interagency operations. They serve as good examples and start points for the interagency organizational structure required along the SWB. However, the DoD served as the lead agency for these organizations. The challenges and mission along the SWB require a DHS-led and funded interagency, or whole-of-government, organizational structure to foster collaboration, coordination, and unity of effort for the agencies involved in operations along the SWB.

Joint Interagency Task Force-Illicit Trafficking (JIATF-IT)

The U.S. Government must establish a DHS-led and funded JIATF along the SWB, JIATF-IT, to provide an interagency organizational structure to enhance and streamline operations by providing centralized planning, coordination, and command and control for all agencies involved. A proposed organizational structure is shown in Figure 3.

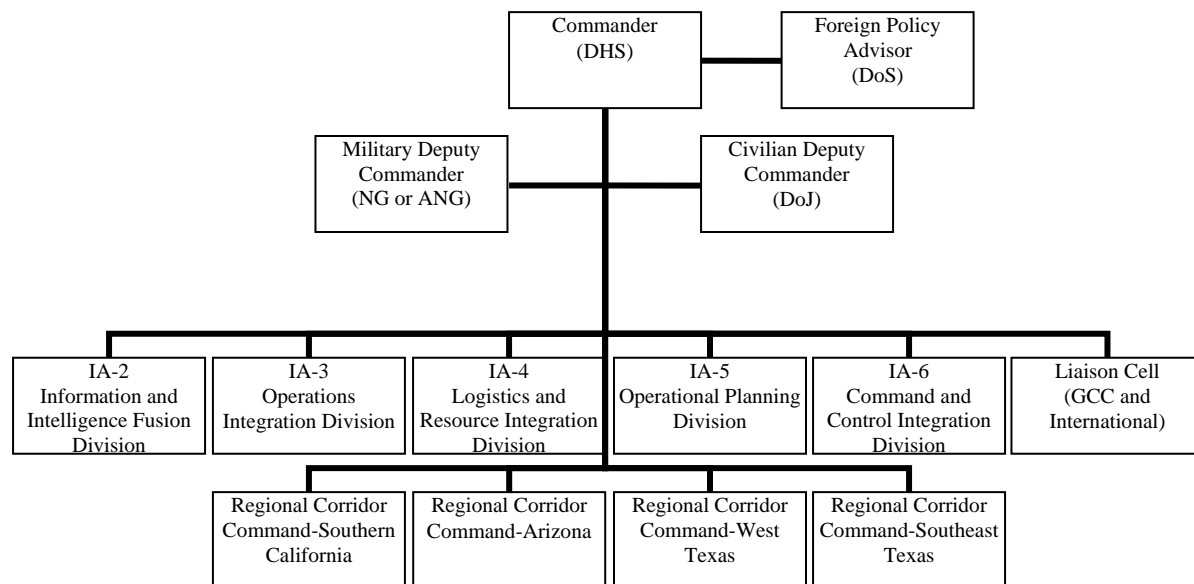


Figure 3. JIATF-IT Organizational Structure⁴⁹

Authority and Responsibility

For JIATF-IT to become an effective interagency organizational structure, it requires a commander empowered with decision-making and directive authorities codified in executive order or legislation to enable the organization to cut across traditional agency stovepipes and cultures to facilitate not only unity of effort but unity of command as well. Colonel Richard S. Daum, USA describes what these authorities allow the organization to accomplish. Decision-making authority allows the commander to compel action from all agencies involved during planning, execution, and assessment of operations. Directive authority allows the commander to establish objectives, set priorities, task agencies and employ interagency resources assigned to the JIATF without the requirement of gaining approval from a higher authority or the individual HQ for each agency. The ability to task agencies and direct the resources of those agencies serve as the key points for directive authority.⁵⁰ The codification of these authorities as well as participation by the various agencies involved in operations along the SWB would solve some of the problems that hamper the current JIATFs. The authority of the current JIATFs do not appear in any executive order or legislation. The authority of the JIATFs and participation of the various agencies remain largely voluntary. The interagency partners will remain invested only as long as the JIATFs help them achieve their particular agency's objectives and goals.

Command Deck

Unlike JIATF-South, JIATF-IT would work through a DHS chain of command and not a military chain of command. The DHS would rotate the commander position between its agencies involved in operations along the SWB with two deputy commanders, civilian and military. A USCG O-8 or DHS (ICE or CBP) Senior Executive Service (SES) would serve as the commander. A DoJ (ATF, DEA, or FBI) SES would serve as the civilian deputy

commander. An Air National Guard (ANG) or National Guard O-7 would serve as the military deputy commander. The military deputy commander position would rotate between the four border states. Modifications to Titles 10 and 32 would need to occur to allow an ANG or National Guard O-7 to serve as the military deputy commander of the DHS-led organization. Additionally, the commander would have a senior Foreign Service Officer from the Department of State (DoS) as his Foreign Policy Advisor.

Staff Structure

JIATF-IT would not require the U.S. government to start from scratch. The current multi-agency initiatives as well as intelligence and fusion centers currently employed along the SWB can provide the foundation from which to build the new JIATF. JTF-North and EPIC located at Fort Bliss, Texas would serve as the core for the HQ element of the new JIATF to integrate the staff functions. The military staff of JTF-North would bring a level of experience and training in planning and staff functions (combined and joint staff) not typically found in the other federal agencies. Their competency in contingency and crisis action planning serves as the most important capability the military brings to the interagency team. EPIC provides an established intelligence center that can serve as the “hub” for intelligence sharing for the subordinate fusion centers throughout the SWB region. Each Interagency (IA) staff division would have a military O-6 (includes USCG) as the Director and a civilian General Schedule (GS)-13 from DHS or DoJ as the Deputy. The Liaison Cell would consist of liaison officers from geographic combatant commands (GCCs), USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM, and international stakeholders such as Canada, Mexico and El Salvador. This integrated staff structure combines the knowledge of the federal law enforcement agencies of their requirements

with the military's ability to coordinate and integrate resources to accomplish the mission effectively and efficiently.⁵¹

Regional Corridor Command (RCC) Structure

Under the JIATF HQ, the ACTT and Joint Field Command-Arizona structure would serve as the foundation for the establishment of four RCCs aligned with the well-established trafficking corridors: Southern California, Arizona/Sonora, New Mexico/West Texas, and Southeast Texas. Each RCC would absorb, consolidate, and, if feasible, co-locate the structure and functions of the HIDTA Investigative Support Centers, BEST teams, and state and local fusion centers within its region. Additionally, the U.S. Government would need to engage the GoM to align their military and law enforcement areas of operations with the same corridors on the Mexican side of the SWB to forge partnerships between the RCCs and its Mexican counterparts and secure the corridors on both sides of the SWB. Similar to the JIATF HQ, the commander for each RCC would come from and rotate between DHS agencies with the deputy commander provided by the ANG or National Guard. A USCG O-6 or DHS (ICE or CBP) GS-15 would serve as the commander. An ANG or National Guard O-5 would serve as the deputy commander. The staff structure for each RCC would mirror the JIATF HQ with the exception of the Liaison Cell. ANG, National Guard and USCG personnel would serve as the military representatives on the RCC staffs. The RCC structure aligns with recommendations made by the SWBTF to the HSAC. In the report, the SWBTF recommended that DHS adopt a corridor security approach to border security using the ACTT model or a whole-of-government approach to law enforcement coordination, information sharing, planning and execution.⁵²

Conclusion

A change must occur along the SWB to address the national security threat on the U.S. doorstep. The JIATF-IT organizational structure aligns with President Obama's guidance in the 2010 National Security Strategy for integrating the country's homeland security and national security efforts. It addresses the coordination, integration, and synchronization problems that currently impede interagency operations along the SWB. Finally, the JIATF-IT structure leverages effectively the capabilities of the participating agencies.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACTT	Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats
ANG	Air National Guard
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
BEST	Border Enforcement Security Task Force
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoS	Department of State
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
EPIC	El Paso Intelligence Center
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GoM	Government of Mexico
GS	General Schedule
HIDTA	High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
HQ	Headquarters
HSAC	Homeland Security Advisory Council
IA	Interagency
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
JFC	Joint Field Command
JIATF	Joint Interagency Task Force
JIATF-IT	Joint Interagency Task Force-Ilicit Trafficking
JTF	Joint Task Force
MSCLEA	Military Support to Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies
NICCP	National Interdiction Command and Control Plan
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
OCDETF	Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces
OIG	Office of Inspector General
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
RCC	Regional Corridor Command
SES	Senior Executive Service
SWB	Southwest Border
SWBTF	Southwest Border Task Force
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
U.S.	United States
USA	U.S. Army

USAF	U.S. Air Force
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USMACV	U.S. Military Assistance Command – Vietnam
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps
USN	U.S. Navy
USNORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command

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